

GER107: CULTURAL STUDIES

LECTURE 1 NOTES

THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

What are cultural studies?

Cultural studies are the use of social science discipline as a means of understanding culture. Cultural studies seek to study people's behavior and attitudes towards other people both living and dead. It entails about our beliefs about God and our belief about hereafter (life after death). The way we greet each other and the way we conduct business with each other. Cultural studies seek to better understand in order to appreciate how other people conduct themselves and how people differ from each other in many ways from culture to culture. We seek to understand the universality of culture which means that every society has some form of culture. There is no society without culture. Also, the fact that culture is heterogeneous, which means that every society in the world has their own unique culture different from others.

What is culture?

Culture is a universal concept and experience. It is the established pattern of behavior among people. It is an all embracing and heterogeneous concept that encompasses every aspect of human life and experiences. It is perceived as a way of life or the totality of all human efforts and achievements. It is a collective and integrated whole, comprising everything about man's ideas, behaviors and products. It includes religion, language, philosophy, music, dance, drama, political organization, technology and so on. Human beings create the things that make up culture, and absorb these things by living in cultural setting. Human beings are cultural beings because they have their own established pattern of behavior in each group, they operate in.

The two distinctions form of culture

Culture has two distinctions: these are as follows. 1) material culture – material culture has two concrete things that we see and touch like food, dress, drums, pottery etc.

2) and non-material culture- Non material culture is the abstract things like languages, religious beliefs, moral behaviors etc.

Agents of cultural transmission

Culture is transmitted from generation to generation by agents such as family, peer group, school, religion, society, etc.

Sources of African culture:

1. A major source of African culture is oral tradition which are oral sources i.e. testimony of past events and oral evidences e.g. eye witness account.
2. Archaeology is the scientific study of man through the excavations of cultural remains such as skeletons, fossils, tools, ornaments, pottery, ruins of settlements etc.
3. Written records such as journals, books, newspapers, diaries etc.

4. Music, stories, dance, drama, masquerade, decoration, painting, folktales, festivals, carving, mask.

Why do humans have culture?

Some scholars argued that unlike other animals it is only human beings that have the perception of right and wrong, good or bad, ugliness or beauty, truth and falsehood and so on. According to them humans have a highly developed faculty that facilitates the acquisition of culture and makes it possible for humans to transmit culture between generations. Every human society uses its technology in food sustenance, water, medicine, weapons, housing and shelter to protect them from danger. Human beings can adapt to different environmental conditions because of the great flexibility of humanity's means of adaptation.

Humans communicate with symbols in three basic ways. These are:

1. Spoken language
2. Written language
3. NVC (Non-verbal communication). Through gestures and body movements.

GER107: CULTURAL STUDIES

LECTURE 2 NOTES

Important standards of cultural tenets

When we speak of culture we usually speak about concepts like custom, beliefs, and other capabilities such as values, norms, traditions, mores, folkways, language, ethnicity, technology and laws. These social variables provide the unique definition of culture for the understanding and adjustment of life in a given societal conditions. The following are important standards of cultural tenets cherished by society:

1. Tradition refers to the customs, rituals, belief, folklore, and habits in a given society. When we speak about culture, the usual key concept is experiences derived from that community. E.g. Eight-day naming ceremony, Funeral ceremonies, etc.
2. Folkways are the expected behavior being practiced in society. It is the customary habitual ways of acting within society. Examples are distributing and sharing kola nuts at ceremonies, shaking of hands, greetings of known and unknown persons on the way. Sharing of food, etc.
3. Beliefs are the ideas, viewpoints and attitudes of the particular group of society. They consist of fables, proverbs, myths, folklore, traditions, superstitions and education, that influences the ideas, values, emotions, perceptions and attitude of the members of the society. E.g. A woman at her pregnant state is not supposed to look at ugly objects for fear that the child would look ugly. She is not to take bath at night to avoid being seen by evil spirits.
4. Values are the common ethical standards in a civilized society wherein group members have the ability to distinguish what is right or wrong. They are deep-seated sentiments shared by members of society that will often dictate the action and behavior of its members. Examples are self-respect (**horomo, njom**), politeness (**kersa/fanmajiyo**), empathy (**balfa/ yermade**), accommodate others (**teranga/ bunya**), helpfulness, honesty, fair play, hospitality, removing dusty shoes when entering someone's house. Etc.

5. Norms are unquestionable standards of what the society consider as good and proper for social behavior. they are prescribed social standards that should be followed because they are appropriate, legal, ethical and right actions. However, those who would not follow the set of societal standards are considered illegal, immoral, wrong, bad, and improper such as homosexuals, incest, suicide, etc.
6. Language is a form of communication that represents the spoken and written words to convey information of an individual or group of people. Language can be written forms, words, numbers, even non-verbal communication such as facial expression and body movements and other sign languages.eg eye blinking gestures
7. Mores are the long-established customs and traditions that have bearing in moral and ethical values of the society. Mores carried significant implications of right and wrong. The mores of a society are the dos and don'ts. Examples of don'ts are insincerity, disrespect, jealousy, envy, evil eyes, betrayals, rivalry, incest, infidelity or sex abuse, mutual enmity. Fighting both in the physical and metaphysical sense etc.
8. Totems. A totem can be an animal, a plant or any other natural object believed to be ancestrally related to a clan, ethnic group or family group as a tutelary (**providing protective supervision; watching over or safeguarding**) spirit. Some families are associated with animals and birds and they are forbidden to hunt or harm such animals. They have the belief that none of these potentially dangerous creatures would harm them if they come into contact with them. Such animals are not killed, eaten or trapped by the family group. Examples **Njies** and **lions (Gainde Njie) Darboes** and the **wuyawuya** bird etc.
9. Joking relationship: a joking relationship is a concerted relationship conceived by two families, clans, ethnic groups or regions to pacify acrimony or to show profound gratitude for a special favor. It is put into action on special occasions such as clash of protagonist, assistance giving in times of distress and despair or between cousins. In the Gambia various communities and ethnic families have joking relationship such as **Ceesays** and **Tourays**, **Chams** and **Sarrs**, **Jallows** and **Bahs**, **Jammehs** and **Darboes**, between **Jolas**, **Fulas**, and **serers**. **Nuimi** and **Jarra**, **Sarahulehs** and **Badibunkas**. **Gunjur** and **Sukuta** etc. etc.

GER107: CULTURAL STUDIES

Lecture 3 Notes

The study of culture

The discipline of culture is studied using multi-disciplinary approach. This approach refers to the use of social science disciplines as a form of cultural information. Scholars want to use the findings of other disciplines like archaeology, linguistics, art, psychology and ethnography (**the branch of anthropology that provides scientific description of individual human societies**) in their effort to promote a better understanding and development of culture. E.g. African culture. The various fields used to study culture includes: archeology, linguistics, history, religious studies and anthropology. Let's now focus our attention on few of these disciplines used to study culture for our better understanding of the discipline.

Archaeology a branch of the broader field of history, studies material culture, the remains of extinct human cultures (e.g. pottery, weaponry) in order to decipher (To convert code into ordinary language) something of the way people lived. Archaeological information is obtained through the excavations of sites that contained hidden remains of human beings and their activities. Our studies of archeological remains help us to understand how people might have lived there years before.

Linguistics is the scientific study of the origin, structure and changes in a language or languages. Looking at linguistic evidences we may conclude that if languages are closely related it may be that these speakers may have something in common about their origin or the ancestors of the speakers of these languages shared common locations at some time in the past. For instances, the **Wolofs** due to their commercial and social contacts with the French for a considerable period of time both before and during the colonial era picked up French words like **Siyo** for bucket, **marche** for market (according to information the Wolof traditionally called **marche jaha**, **Manjakos** called it **kanm**, **Balanta Fera**, **Fula Gierah** and **Mandinka Luba**), **hopital** for hospital, **chef** for chief, **boutique** for shop, etc. etc. Likewise, **Mandinkas** also through their commercial and social contacts with the Portuguese picked up words like **Kalero** for cooking pot, **Kojaro** for spoon, etc. etc. and in recent times their contact with the British adopted English words using their “O” to form various nouns e.g. **booko** for book, **bicyclo** for bicycle, **schoolo** for school, **boyo** for boy etc. With social contacts with Muslim traders and scholars picked up Arabic words like **Kairo** for peace, **masibo** for calamity etc. etc. It could be noted that these trends are found in all other ethnic languages in The Gambia. linguistic studies therefore could be a good source of our understanding of our culture and why and how so many languages tend to have similar words.

Cultural psychology: cultural psychology is the study of the cultures that reflect and shape the psychological processes of their members. The main tenet of cultural psychology is that mind and culture are inseparable and mutually constitutive, meaning that people are shaped by their culture and their culture is also shaped by them. In using psychology, scholars discover the ways in which the thoughts and actions of individuals have affected the destinies of nations. For instances, how the thoughts and actions of **Mahatma Ghandi** help liberate India from colonial bandage. And how **Nelson Mandela** help liberate South Africa from apartheid (A social policy or racial segregation involving political and economic and legal discrimination against people who are not Whites).

GER107: CULTURAL STUDIES

LECTURE 4 NOTES

MYTH OF HUMAN EVOLUTION

What is the theory of evolution?

The theory of evolution by natural selection was first formulated in **Charles Darwin's** book “**on the origin of species in 1859**”. Evolution is the process by which organism changed over time as a result of changes in heritable physical or behavioral traits. Changes that

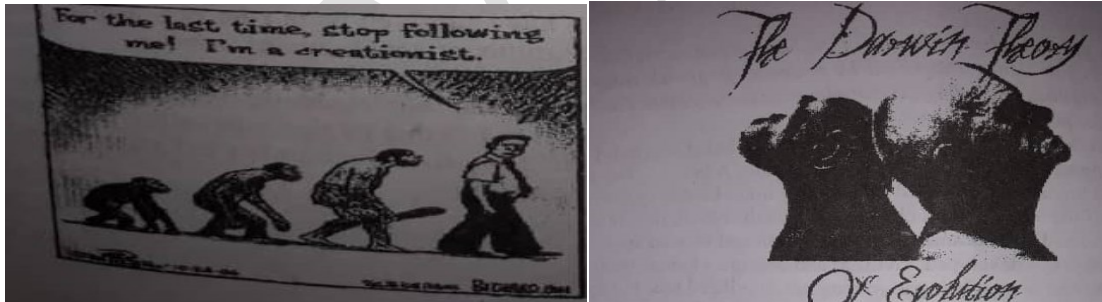
allows an organism to better adapt to its environment will help it survive and have more Offspring.

Evolution by natural selection is one of the best substantial theories in the history of science supported by evidences from wide range of scientific disciplines, including paleontology (the earth science that studies fossil organisms and related remains), geology (the science that deals with the history of earth as recorded in rocks), genetics (the branch of biology that studies heredity and variation in organisms) and developmental psychology (the branch of psychology that studies the social and mental development of children).

According to Darwin's theory of the origin of human beings was not Adam, but that we descended from another source besides Adam. Darwin believed that human started off as a tiny microbe that appeared on the surface of the water, then it changed to a small animal, then this animal progressed and became a frog, then a fish and then an ape. Eventually, this ape developed, civilized and became a human being. This ape was by its genius and intelligence, able to evolve and change into an intelligent man. Thus, Darwin makes our ancestry animal. However, the million Dollar question we can raise is that why can't the apes of our time also evolve and develop as their forefathers had developed?

It should be also noted that all divine scriptures and reports from the people of all nations and religions was that Adam was the father of creation, God created Adam then Awa/Eve and the two got married. Through human reproductive system they begot children, who begot children, who begot children up to our time and the process continues until the end of time. In a nutshell, Adam was definitely the first human being.

This picture shows the progression of the ape man from one generation to another until the final most acceptable structure of modern man was produced.



WHAT IS PRE-HISTORY?

Pre-history is the name given by scholars to part of human culture and experience that happened before the invention of writing. It extended back in the time at least 100,000 years ago. Prehistory may extend even farther than that, to one million years or even three million years. There is far more prehistory than history, and yet, we know more about the last six thousand years than we do about the previous million.

The period therefore ended when written sources of history appeared.

The pre-history period was in three stages.

1. The early stone age
2. The middle stone age
3. The late stone age

The divisions era associated with stone because stone was the main hard tool-making material to have survived from the very ancient past. The various stages marked significant development in stone tool-making technologies by human being and also how human being was improving upon his skills in his environment, security and food procurement demand. Human kind in this period was called “near man” or “ape man” by archaeologist. They lived by hunting and gathering and therefore were called hunter-gathers.

GER107: CULTURAL STUDIES

LECTURE 5 NOTES

GAMBIAN MUSIC AND DANCE

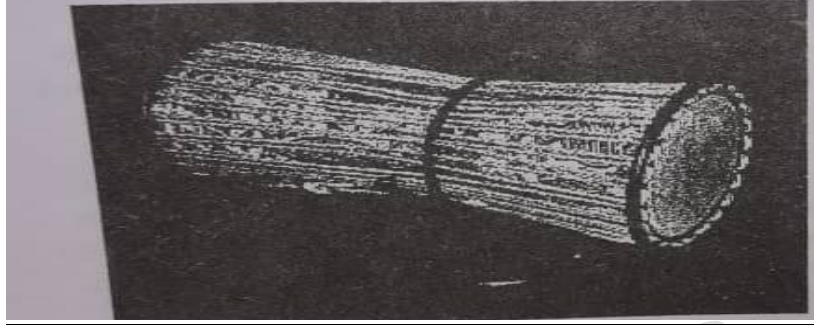
Music is a very important item in the cultural inventory of a people and their way of life. In the Gambia music is represented not only by sound, but by musical instruments as well. Some of these instruments have survived over a considerable span of time. Song lyrics in the Gambia could be used to bring historical information to mind.

Besides, studies have shown curative effect of music to both plants and animals. **Dorothy Retallack** in her book “music and plants” claims that music can help plant grow. In her study done on plants, it was shown that plants exposed to music grew in size, full and green and leaned towards the source of the music. Studies have also shown that people with neurological damage caused by stroke or Parkinson disease regain a symmetrical strides and sense of balance when given a rhythm to dance or walk. Series of hearing test was also done on old age to check the advantage of music to the ears. The study shows that musicians processed sound earing than non-musicians.

Today Gambian traditional songs and music are widely treated as old fashioned and fading away rapidly in social gatherings because of alien music and songs. People do not realize that music and songs revive and glorify the past and make a critique of the modern mind. Music and songs are the snapshot of society at any given time in history. They have the mission of exploring the behavior of the people, of critiquing, of informing, of shaping and of upbraiding the people. Certain songs need to be preserved for posterity as they go beyond personalities and become a national heritage that reinforces the sense of communality.

Gambian Musical Instruments

1. **Tama** refer to as talking drum is common to the wolofs and is played at event s marking rites of passage such as ceremonial weddings, naming ceremonies and social gatherings. The talking drum is a Senegambia drum whose pitch can be regulated to the extent that it seems to talk.



Picture of Tama

2. **Bougarabou** are played by the Jola which comprise of several drums with different pitches which are played all at once by the same drummer.
3. **Balafong** was also believed to have originated from spirits given to the 13-century king of the Western Sudanese kingdom of Kaniaga, Sumanguru Kanteh. Sumanguru used the Balafong as the security guard to the palace gate. The Balafong informed Sumanguru of any threat or danger on his person or the palace by given a special tone on its own.



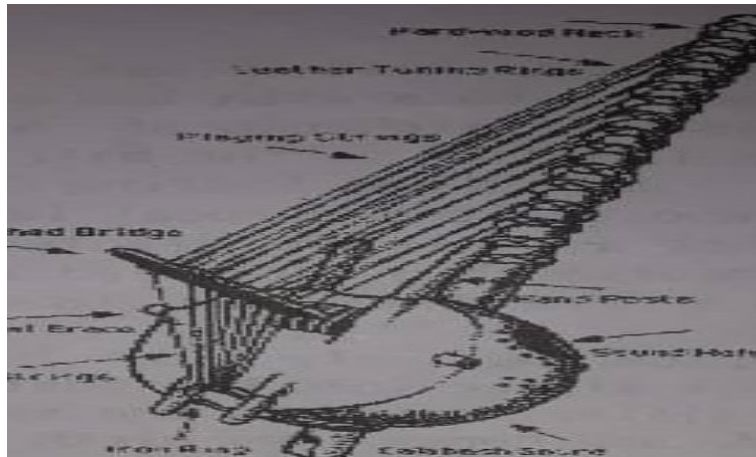
The Balafong.

4. **Halam** is among the common musical instruments in Senegambia. Griots of many ethnic groups play it, including the wolof (halam,) serer, Mandinka(konting), fula (Hoddu). Sarahule and Tukolor. The Halam shows great diversity in its construction and playing style from ethnic group to ethnic group. Halam has a dryer, more nasal sound than the Kora. Most Halam have four or five strings, although some have up to eight. In manding societies Halam may be accompanied by a Kora or Balafong. Legendary halam players in Senegabia were Ama Ndiaye samb, Abdoulie Nar Samb, Abdoules Soce, Samba Diahbare Samb, Boucounta Ndiaye and the great Malian player Banzoumana ciissokho who was reputed that he could get out of the room, but his halam would continue playing without him.



Man playing Halam

5. **Kora** was believed to have been given to a jail by the name Koriyang Musa Suso by spirits in Senengmentereng in Brufut. According to the story, Koriyang musa went to the sacred place to seek glory and fame. A spirit appeared and handed him the maiden Kora and told him that it was the symbol of glory and fame. Koriyang musa gave his daughter to the spirits in exchange of the Kora. As Koriyang musa started playing the kora it gives many rhythm. He named it “Kora” meaning gathered because it gathered different sounds of music at once. It is important to not that different version to the founding of Kora existed and one of the versions argued that the 19th century Koriyang musa was far younger than the Kora, that it was Jali Madi Wuleng Suso who founded the Kora with the aid of spirits in Kabu empire also in exchange of his daughter. Yet another version links it the Mali empire. In this version it was Jali Mady Fouling Cissoko, son of Bamba cissoko who visited a local lake in which he was informed that a genie who granted wished had resided. Upon meeting him, Mady requested that the genie make him a brand-new instrument that no griot had ever owned. The genie accepted, but only under the condition that may releases his sister from custody. After being informed, the sister agreed to the sacrifice, the genie complied, and hence, the birth of the legendary Kora. Traditional Kora feature 21 strings, eleven played by the left hand and ten by the right hand. The Kora instrument is played in Guinea Conakry, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Senegal, and The Gambia. The kora is mentioned in the Senegalese national anthem “Pincez tous vos Koras, Frappez les Balafons,” which means “All of you pinch the Kora and beat the Balafong”.



The kora

Preservation of music culture all this aspect of our culture needs to be preserved by no other than ourselves. We owe it to the future generation. The ball is in our court and it needs no shifting of the goal post.

GER 107: CULTURAL STUDIES

LECTURE 6 NOTES

TRADITIONAL ORAL LITERATURE AND STORY TELLING

Included proverbs, stories, legends and family history that were memorized and passed down from generation to generation. These oral literatures provide important information of historians of Africa poets, novelists and dramatist. Oral literature entertains; gives pleasure and train one to pay attention to his/her historical heritage. It also broadens knowledge and strengthens awareness.

African traditional poetry included epic songs, praise poems to rulers and other prominent people in society. Narrative songs included love songs, work songs such as that of farmers, hunters and fishermen, lullabies and war songs. Religious poetry includes hymns to the gods and prophetic poems for divination. Drums and horns were often used in the transmission of poetry.

In Senegambia the griots through the ages were the custodians of the traditional songs and poems and could compose and perform new songs simultaneously. They conserved the constitutions of states and kingdoms by memory work alone and were the tutors of young princes. They recorded to memory the customs, traditions and governmental practices of kings.

Griots were also the keepers of culture, as their memories and storytelling abilities allowed them to keep alive culture, history and genealogists, chroniclers, diplomats, and arbitrators. They were often well versed in genealogy or family history of everyone in the village going back several generations. They were also known for their music, which was often the means to document their stories and entertain people at the same time.

The art story-telling in Senegambia

The art of story-telling is as old as speech and it evolved naturally because some people prefer telling tales others prefer listening to them. As society developed, people wanted to keep historical accounts of events. Story-tellers featured animals to satirize kings, rulers or events. By using animals, they could make fun of kings without fear of retribution. Most stories have a sense of real life, justice, injustice, fair play, crimes and punishment. A story is a narrative or account of real or imagined events. Stories connect us with our humanness and link past, present and future, teaching us to know the possible results of our actions. Stories are a basic form of human communication, where happenings in our own locality are brought in to focus.

An example of a Gambian story entitled:

No man is perfect

Long ago, there was a rich old man in a village far off. Everybody was astonished at the keenness of his mind and his sensibility. One day he took his cow in search of someone wiser than him around the world. He vows that there was no question he could not answer and anyone who could tell him something which he could not answer he would give you a cow.

He traveled until he was tired, he could not find anybody that could stand him. He then decided to return home. When he was returning, he reached a small village and entered a compound so that he could drink. He didn't meet anyone there except a small child. He greeted the child and asked him water to drink. The boy went to fetch water but spent a long time there. When he came back the old man told him why did you spent so much time. The boy told him I found last year's water and this year's water quarrelling I was separating them. The old man thought for a while and said I don't know your explanation, tell me please. The boy said to him I found the water in the jar stir up; I was waiting until it settled. The old man then told him five me fire to light my pipe. The boy went again and spent a long time, when he come back with the fire, the old man told him but you spent much long time my child. The boy said to him I found the charcoal pieces had put on their clothes. I was undressing them. The old man thought but could not solve it. He asked the child again, who told him I found the fire had gone down, ashes had covered it all. I gathered up the ashes so that I could find the charcoal below. The old man agreed.

The old man asked him where your mother is, the child said my mother is between life and death. That also the old man could not solve. He asked the child again, the child told him, my mother is in childbirth that's why I told you she is between life and death. He again asked the child where is his father. The child said to him, our outside farms where far off he went to shorten the distance. The old man asked the child the answer, the child replied he is weeding the path ways to stopping the morning dew making the going hard. The old man said it is true. He finally asked him where his brother is. The child said my brother had news of death and he went to meet it. The old man was startled and said what did you say.? The child said someone's wife had slept the night at my brother's house and he went to see her off towards her husband's house. Was he not going towards the possibility of being killed by the girl's husband? That is why I said he has gone to meet death. The old man was astonished. He gave the child the cow and left in humility.

GER 107: CULTURAL STUDIES

LECTURE 7 NOTES

GAMBIAN PROVERBS, RIDDLES AND TONGUE TWISTERS.

The wit and wisdom of Gambians are expressed in their proverbs and riddles. Proverbs are short structured sentences or sayings with clear meanings. Proverbs can be said anywhere and anytime depending on the context. The context of what is being said determines the type of proverb appropriate for that situation.

In the Gambia, proverbs are used in the form of short sentences used in discussions to substantiate thoughts and ideas. In some instances, where are used to give advice about life in general drawn from traditional wit and wisdom. They are also often quoted to draw similarities between situations. The source of a particular proverb is not known, but it covered every facet of Gambia social life. They are born out of people's experiences and wisdom handed down from generation to generation. There are no restrictions about who can use proverbs as long as they are used in their right context and directed at the right people. It is important that the right proverb is used at the right time and in the right place, in order to avoid shaming one or offending others.

Gambian proverbs and possible meanings.

1. If you are as tall as or taller than your father you are still not his equal meaning. One should never challenge his father.
2. Rats don't go to cat's dance meaning. An enemy is always an enemy.
3. A single bracelet does not jingle meaning. Unity is strength
4. One falsehood spoils a thousand truths meaning. Hatred loses credibility by lying.
5. There is no medicine to cure hatred meaning. Hatred is everlasting.
6. A close friend can become a close enemy meaning. Nothing is permanent
7. When there is no enemy within the enemy outside cannot hurt you meaning. It is often the one close to you that opens the way for the enemy.
8. A kajali lizard in the village is a kajali lizard in the town meaning. Habit does not change.
9. Character is like smoke it cannot be hidden meaning. Habit is unchangeable.
10. He who is not beaten by the sun or rain will be bitten by hunger meaning. You will remain hungry if you do not work
11. Nothing moves faster than gossip meaning. Gossiping is dangerous.
12. The youth walks faster than the elderly but the elderly knows the road meaning. The elderly knows what is good or bad
13. An old man's mouth may be twisted but not his words meaning. An old man should never be underrated.
14. Easy finishes the job well meaning. It is better to work slowly and carefully.
15. A donkey does not give birth in public. Meaning to be discrete is virtuous.
16. To have an agreement before hand is better than blinking an eye in discussion. Meaning always plan ahead.
17. You cannot be standing on an anthill and insult the ground. Meaning don't be critical on those responsible for you.

18. Do not leave the fish in your hand to catch the fish under your feet. Meaning cherish what you have.
19. An old man sitting down sees further than a young person standing. Meaning old age is wisdom
20. Words are like a bullet once fired it cannot be returned. Meaning be prudent when speaking.
21. You cannot buy a squirrel in a hole. Meaning don't rush with things.
22. Everything has a tomorrow. Meaning be mindful of the future.
23. When god claps for you, you should dance. Meaning take advantage of situations as they presented themselves.
24. If you want it all you lose it all. Meaning don't be greedy.
25. It is the head that dances to the drum beats of the heart. Meaning when dealing with delicate matters always proceed with caution.
26. A slap does not break the head but opens the eye. Meaning experience is the best teacher.
27. Do not insult the crocodile until you cross the water. Meaning be careful about criticizing others.
28. If you tell people to live together, you tell them to quarrel. Meaning no heart feeling.
29. The frog wanted to be like elephant and burst. Meaning you cannot be what you are not.
30. If you do not stand for something, you will fall for something. Meaning life is a struggle.
31. A monkey can never sneeze like a man. Meaning you are always what you are.
32. Don't punch a mouth whom your hand is in his mouth. Meaning subdue to your benefactor.
33. Do not abandon your chicken for the new guinea fowl. Meaning be always grateful.
34. A monkey who holds a branch with two hands will not be easy to fall. Meaning be always steadfast.
35. One cannot be running and scratching the knee at the same time. Meaning one has to concentrate on one thing at a time.
36. Truth is never bitter in the mouth of the truthful. Meaning one tells the truth under all circumstances.
37. Shit smells no matter how small. Meaning trouble is never small.
38. No matter how long a log of wood may be in the river, it cannot be a crocodile. Meaning whatever one is one remains the same.
39. The mother of a one-legged baby knows how to carry it. Meaning you cannot tell a property owner more than what he knows about his property.
40. You can stop a dog from your yard but not from other people's yard. Meaning you can say you don't like me but don't say others wouldn't like me
41. You cannot chase two squirrels at the same time. Meaning if you want all you lose all
42. A goat's tail cannot cover the buttocks nor chase away flies. Meaning a worthless or useless person cannot do any good to himself or to others.
43. A little bird that jumps about always breaks its own egg. Meaning misbehavior can lead you to regret things.
44. A tortoise goes with its roof. Meaning be prepared for any challenges.

45. to love goat milk so much that you call a he goat uncle. Meaning a boot licker.
46. To express tears of sympathy in the rain. Meaning insincerity.
47. Words are not wisdom. Meaning the best speaker may not be wise.

RIDDLES

A Riddle is a statement and, in most cases, an incomplete sentence deliberately designed to confuse the listeners and at the same time test their wit. As part of oral traditional art, riddles keep the past: borrow from the present and considered one of the oldest games of the world. Joseph Ki-Zebo, the great Burkinabe historian wrote: "Just as all traditional oral literature, riddles too were part of the socializing system of learning and of formal education." the conundrums of riddles involve puns and plays on words and may have multiple meanings. Examples of Gambian Riddles.

1. What has a fork and a mouth but cannot eat. A river because it has tributaries and mouth.
2. What is the house my father built with no central pole? The sky.
3. What is the fire God lit and never put out? The Sun
4. What is it that cannot be counted? The stars or sand.
5. What is it that when it falls does not make noise? The night
6. What is it that we hear with our own ears without seeing it with our own eyes: The wind.
7. Who is loved but has done no good? A Baby
8. My son is crying in the forest. I hear him but I do not see him? The wind.

Some riddles are not presented as questions but as true statements of something the listener has to catch, interpret and locate in its proper context. Examples.

9. Nyekeleng always steals from the rich because the poor are his enemies. The poor has nothing to be stolen.
10. Kim kin and Kam Kam are brothers. Coconut and palm fruits
11. The villagers of Nye spread their mattress but before they sit on it a rude girl did. The housefly.
12. Buu cannot sleep in the house because it is too small for him, he tries the veranda which is too small but at least he tries the groundnut shell and could stretch himself. Buu is never satisfied.
13. The villages of Nye spread an elephant hide but they cannot fit on it, they spread an elephant hide but they cannot fit on it but at last they spread the hide of a goat and they all sit comfortably. Nye is a divided community.

Tongue twisters

Tongue twisters have the function of testing a speaker's fluency to utter without hesitation or faltering, a sequence of words with themselves have a basic articulation. The words themselves have a basic meaning, usually of a jocular nature. Part of the fun of performing tongue twisters

consists in the likelihood that distortion twisters consists in the likelihood that distortion of the utterance due to the articulation problems will result in distortion or confusion of meaning. Structurally tongue twisters hinge mainly on both alliterations. The repetition of a series of consonants and assonance and the repetition of a series of vowels. Since tongue twisters depend on grammatical loose structure of the language, they lose their structural arrangement and artistic appeal upon translation.

examples

she sells sea shells at the sea shore, but the sea shell she sells are sea shore shells.

A plantation planner planted plantain in a plantain plantation.

Father Francis fried fresh fish for five fathers from France.

A brick sat on a block and block sat on a brick but the brick stumble and the block stump, stunk, thunk, and skunk.

A noisy noise annoys Mr. Noise who warns noisy to desist noise or lese noisy will be dealt with by noise.

Fat fish flying past fast frying pan.

Fleeing from fog to fight snow but drizzle run faster to fight dew!

GER107: CULTURAL STUDIES

LECTURE 8 NOTES

UNIVERSITY CULTURE

Pre-Colonial System of Education in Africa.

In Africa indigenous education represents the type of education offered within the community, by community members who possessed specialized skills or abilities in various fields of human endeavors. Boys were trained on their father's profession or sent to other masters as apprentices to learn various vocation and life etiquette. Children was taught occupational skills like farming, trading, craft work, fishing, palm wine tapping, traditional medicine, blacksmithing, pottery, basketry, leather work. Etc. Children of royal descent were taught skills like arbitration of cases, oratory, wise sayings use of proverbs, etc.

The concept of Education in Africa was not Colonial Invention.

Prior to European colonization in every society is to prepare individuals to participate fully and effectively in their world; it prepares youths to be active and productive members of their societies by inculcating the skills necessary to achieve these goals. Although its functions varied, African tradition education was not compartmentalized. Fundamentally, it was targeted toward producing an individual who grew to be well grounded, skillful, cooperative, civil, and be able to contribute to the development of the community. The educational structure in which well-rounded qualities were imparted was fundamentally informal; the family, kinship, village group, and the larger community participated in the education and socialization process.

The medium of instruction was the native language or “mother tongue” through which systematic instruction was delivered by way of songs, stories, legends, and dances to stimulate children’s emotions and quicken their perception as they explore and conquer their natural environment. **The African child was taught the various** societal laws and customs and wide range of skills required for success in traditional society.

Those who took to fishing were taught navigational techniques like seafaring, the effects of certain stars on tide and ebb, migration patterns and behavior of fish. Those who took to farming had similar training. Those who learned trades and crafts, such as blacksmithing, weaving, woodwork, and bronze work, needed a high degree of specialization and were often apprenticed outside their homes for training and discipline. Those who took to the profession of traditional priesthood, village heads, kings, medicine men and women diviners, rainmakers, and rulers underwent a longer period of painstaking training and rituals to prepare them for the vital job they were to perform.

Teaching was basically by example and learning by doing. African education emphasizes equal opportunity for all, social solidarity and homogeneity. It was complete and relevant to the needs and expectations of both the individuals and society. This is because it was an integral part of the social, political, and economic foundation of the African society.

Colonial Education in Africa

Colonial education policies shared similar aims and objectives throughout Africa.

1. Promote literacy among few to enable them read and write
2. Discourage the natives against what were believed to be backward beliefs, and practices
3. Train additional manpower necessary for the strengthening of the colony.
4. Train few leaders who would be supportive and protective to the state.
5. Soften the hearts and minds of the people and ensure obedience and loyalty to the state.
6. Produce a small group of artisans, clerks and progressive farmers.

Therefore, the colonial governments did not aim at educating the majority of the subjects. Nor did they train highly qualified men and women. They wanted to minimize costs and avert the possible danger of arousing nationalism among the masses. They also used the education system to promote a sense of inferiority among the colonized people of Africa to enable them continue the political domination, economic imperialism and social subjugation.

In British West Africa post-secondary school education below degree was offered by only three institutions of higher learning. Achimota College near Accra in Ghana, Fourah Bay College in Freetown, Sierra Leone and the Higher College of Yaba near Lagos in Nigeria. It was only after the second World War that the first African universities began as “University Colleges” affiliated with British universities. University of London entered into a scheme of “special relationship” with African Colleges, where the British government provided the funding and University of London provided staff and advice. With this arrangement the graduates of these university colleges were given the University of London-guaranteed degrees. This was how universities in Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda, Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, etc, started.

GER107: CULTURAL STUDIES

LECTURE NOTES 9

UNIVERSITY CULTURE.

Genesis of the university of The Gambia.

In 1995 the government of the Gambia in conjunction with St Mary's University in Nova Scotia established the university extension programme (UEP). UEP was an interim arrangement that would provide degree level education in the Gambia until a new university was established. This programme was coordinated by **Borris Devany** of the Nova Scotia Gambia Association. In this programme lecturers and professors were ferried from St Mary's University to the Gambia to provide necessary academic impetus to students in both the sciences and the liberal arts.

In his zeal to establish Gambia's own university, the president inaugurated the National Commission for the Establishment of the University at the Cabinet Room at State House in August 1996. The National commission submitted its report to the government of the implementation Task forces was of the university of the Gambia. the implementation Task Force was inaugurated on April 24th 1998. The implementation Task Force recommended that:

- a) The intakes for the UEP to be terminated after the commencement of the University of The Gambia.
- b) St Mary's University to continue to award its degree for two years after the commencement of the University of The Gambia.
- c) During the transition period efforts should be intensified to build the necessary capacity in the university of the total takeover of UEP.

The draft UTG bill was completed in November 1998 and enacted into law to the National Assembly in March 1999. The university of The Gambia Act established the university and provide for its powers, aims, objective. And guiding principles and spells out its governance and academic structures. The objectives are to provide opportunity for degree studies in the Gambia in:

Medicine and Allied Health Sciences

Agricultural and Environment

Economic and Management Sciences

Humanities and Social Sciences

Physical and Natural Sciences Including I.C.T., Law, Education, Journalism and Digital Media.

Within the context of the UTG Act the principal functions of the University of the Gambia as prescribed in section 4 (1) shall include:

- 1) Provision of higher education
- 2) Contribution to the advancement of knowledge through research
- 3) Dissemination of knowledge through teaching
- 4) Service to the community
- 5) Contribution to the social and economic development of the Gambia
- 6) Emphasis on quality in content and delivery of subjects to be taught.
- 7) The character shall be non-sectarian
- 8) That higher education be accessible to Gambians who are eligible
- 9) That policies and decisions shall be gender sensitive.

Schools in the University of the Gambia

- 1) School of Arts and Sciences Campus in Brikama
- 2) School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences Campus in Brikama
- 3) School of Education Campus in Brikama
- 4) School of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences Campus in Banjul.
- 5) School of Business and Public Administration Campus In MDI.
- 6) School of I.C.T Campus in Brikama
- 7) Faculty of Law Kanifing MDI Road.
- 8) School of Engineering and Architecture GTTI
- 9) School of Journalism and Digital Media Kanifing.
- 10) School of Graduate Studies and Research

In a nutshell, UTG shall provide students with the facility to realize their full potential both personally and professionally and shall be a center of excellence which will accommodate national, regional and international requirements. The university provides high quality academic and professional training to augment the needs of a high-level work force in the Gambia, immediately and in the near future. Both students and faculty have a role to support and maintain the university's national and international reputation for excellence in teaching and research.

Academic staff promotion.

Progression from one grade to another in university is not automatic but based on the level of contributions to knowledge. Emphasis shall always be on the quality of the contribution. These guidelines shall be applied without favor, ill will or prejudice for appointment and promotion to the various academic posts in the university.

Academic staff is responsible for the efficient planning, organization, implementation and control of all higher education, research, training and continuing education programme of UTG.

Academic Hierarchy

- 1) **Graduate assistant.**

A candidate seeking appointment as a graduate assistant shall possess a good Bachelor's Degree not below Second-class Upper division or its equivalent in the relevant field. He shall be in this post for a maximum of three years, after which his/her appointment shall be determined.

2) Assistant lecturer

For promotion to this position a candidate shall normally possess a good Bachelor's Degree and a Master's Degree with course work and thesis in the subject specialization in which the candidate is seeking appointment. He or she shall be in this post for two or three years after which his/her appointment shall be reviewed.

3) Lecturer II

The usual basic qualifications for appointment or promotions to this position shall be PhD or Master's Degree with two years teaching experience in a university or institution of similar status. He/she shall have two good peer reviewed publications in order to be promoted to the next stage.

4) Lecturer I

He/she shall have at least three years teaching experience with three good peer reviewed publications since appointment as lecturer II.

5) Senior lecturer

He/she shall have not less than two years teaching experience as lecturer I and at least three good peer reviewed publications. He/she must show evidence of ability to provide academic leadership, including the ability to initiate and supervise research.

6) Associate professor

This shall be on the basis of continuing academic achievements, expressed in the form of publications in reputable journals, with a minimum of four good publications since appointment as senior lecturer. He/she must show evidence of ability to provide academic leadership including ability to initiate and supervise research.

7) Professor

This shall be on the basis of distinguishing and continuing contribution to scholarship expressed mainly in the form of a substantial body of distinguishing research publications, a minimum of three good publications since promotion as Associate Professor as well as evidence of ability to provide academic leadership including ability to initiate and supervise research.

Faculty/ lecturer responsibilities

1. To prepare and conduct lectures
2. Organize seminars
3. Publish empirical and theoretical research in scholarly journals
4. Advise students with respect to academic performances and career responsibilities.
5. Is expected to present truthful information in an appropriate and helpful manner.
6. Keeps confidences, admits mistakes, and doesn't misrepresent him or herself as knowing everything.
7. Promotes confidence and optimistic attitudes.
8. Manage all kinds and classes of people equitably, supports equal and fair treatment and opportunity for all.
9. Fosters a climate of inclusion, where diverse thoughts are freely shared and integrated.

10. To have office hours during which students can ask for help, clarification, etc.
11. It is not the lecturer's job to give students passing grade when they don't deserve it. It is not their job to grant students exceptions that would be unfair to everyone else. It is not their job to chase after students to come to class.
12. Monetary inducement marks (MIM) and sexually transmitted marks (S T M) are totally prohibited.

The responsibilities of University students are:

- To show up to class on time and get ready to participate in the learning process.
- You should certainly not be talking when inappropriate, such as during lecture. Don't interrupt other students just because you're bored.
- University education is not easy. It is a challenge. It is not handed to you on a silver platter. You must work for it and work hard to earn grades.
- Always go in for first-rate efforts, if you give a second-rate effort, you deserve second-rate grades and all that comes with that. Don't expect the lecturer to make exceptions for you that wouldn't be made for other students.
- University is for people who wants to learn, not for people looking to get a meaningless piece of paper.
- Respecting the highest standards of academic integrity, respecting the property of others, and the property, equipment, facilities, and programs of the university.
- Refraining from actions that endanger the health, safety, or welfare of any member of the university community.
- Refraining from securing grade by unethical means through impersonating oneself during examination, accepting an unauthorized assistance on a test or examination. Possession of a copy of a test or examination paper in advancement of the examination.

University ceremonies

It is a tradition in university culture that students begin their studies with ceremonies in the university system.

✓ **Orientation ceremony**

This ceremony formally introduces the newly admitted students to academic life style and they are urged to obey all rules and regulations relating to work and conduct. Various administrative and academic officials elaborate on their roles and functions within the university system.

✓ **Matriculation ceremony**

This ceremony formally introduces the newly admitted student to academic life style. Students give their pledge and take oaths that they will be loyal to the university and obey rules and regulations relating to work and conduct. The newly matriculated students are given matriculation numbers or students numbers.

✓ **Convocation ceremony**

This ceremony is the graduation of students who fulfilled all the necessary academic requirements for an award of Degree and have not been found wanting in conduct or performance. Universities all over the world have the authority to confer Degrees at various levels and in specific fields of study. Convocation in the university of the Gambia is normally graced by the university chancellor, parents and well-wishers of the grandaunts (A student who is about to graduate or receive a degree). A student with the highest CGPA (cumulative Grade Point Average) serves as the valedictorian and gives a speech on behalf of his fellow graduants. Prizes are given to the best students in the various departments.

The old grading system.

Percentage	grade	Grade point	Grade Rating.
90-100	A+	4.30	Excellent
80-89	A	4.00	Excellent
70-79	A-	3.70	Excellent
67-69	B+	3.30	Good
64-66	B	3.00	Good
60-63	B-	2.70	Good
57-59	C+	2.30	Satisfactory
54-56	C	2.00	Satisfactory
50-53	C-	1.70	Satisfactory
40-49	D	1.00	Marginal Pass
0-39	F	0.00	Fail

The new grading system. It is now abandoned for the old system

PERCENT EQUIVALENT	GRADE	GRADE POINT	RATING
90-100	A	4.0	OUTSTANDING
80-89	B+	3.5	GOOD
70-79	B	3.0	GOOD
60-69	C+	2.5	SATISFACTORY

50-59	C	2.0	SATISFACTORY
40-49	D	1.0	POOR
0-39	F	0.0	FAILING

Quality point average (QPA) determine the standards of a student's performance for the academic year and is calculated by dividing the total number of quality point by the number of semester hours of the courses taken. Cumulative quality point average (CQPA) is based on all courses taken at the university at the time of graduation.

Distinctions are awarded on the basis of CGPA as follows:

Old grading system

Summa cum laude GPA of 4.00 to 4.30 First class

Magna cum laude GPA of 3.85 to 3.99

Cum laude GPA of 3.70 to 3.84 Second class

1. Valedictory lecture

This lecture is organized for a professor who is about to retire from university service. He\she gives a lecture and talks about his\her area of specialization. No questions or comments are given after the lecture.

2. Inaugural lecture

This ceremony is organized for newly crowned professors. A lecturer who is newly promoted to professorship is officially inaugurated with a lot of fanfare. The procession is led by Graduate Assistant to Lecturer I. They are followed by Senior Lecturers to Assistant Professors. These are followed by Professors and behind them the newly crowned professor and his or her spouse. He\she deliver a lecture on his\her subject of specialization and no questions or comments are made. Presentation questions and comments are made which are noted by the presenter for the improvement of his or her paper.

3. Student unionism

Section 16 (1) of the university of the Gambia Act stated that there shall be a student union of university of the Gambia which shall be representative of all the students of the university. The ultimate purpose of the student union is to democratically represent the interests of the students.

The union carries out representative activities and facilitates peer led support for students. It si responsible for all representation of the students and selects the student membership of

different union administrative organs. They usually coordinate the activities of more specialized student associations in various schools of the university such as SOHSA, ECOMANSA etc. Section 8 (1) (1) of the university of the Gambia Act stated that there shall be a student union representative in the council. Section 16 of the university of the Gambia Act stated that the Senate shall consist of a representative of the student union.

GER107: CULTURAL STUDIES

LECTURE 10 NOTES

Public or Perish Culture in University of the Gambia

In universities all over the world scholars are required to publish or perish. Promotion from one Grade to another depends partly on academic publications. Academics must be involved in Knowledge production. Lecturers publish books, monographs and articles. Students write research projects-Long Essay at undergraduate level, Thesis and Dissertation at postgraduate level.

International stakeholders' and agencies' assessments of the university are the quality and quantity of publications. A newspaper article is not an academic publication and cannot be used for promotion nor can consultancy report be considered a publication. Similarly, articles and books that are not published in a recognized journal cannot be recognized by the intellectual community. The emphasis is all academic publications should be peer reviewed or refereed. Scholars who fail to publish must perish because University is not a place for inactive or unimaginative scholars.

Peer reviewed or Refereed Publications.

Peer review is a scientific process through which manuscripts are examined by other scholars to reinforce quality control. They read the article critically and then either suggest that it is accepted, rejected, or non-frequently-revised and improved before it is published. In fact, most scholars will not consider a scientific pronouncement as valid unless it has been approved by this anonymous process, known as peer review. Without such an external seal of approval, a scholar's work will be considered a press release.

The process also assists authors in meeting the standard of their discipline and to be in conformity with recognized standards. Peer review articles are examined and determined by specialists who recommend modifications and corrections that have to be made before it can be a publishable standard. The remarks made by reviewers help the author in revising the article. Besides, showing work to others increases the probability that weakness will be identified and with advice and encouragement, it will be fixed and repaired.

Limitations of Peer Review

One of the most common complaints about the peer review process is that it is slow and takes several months for a submitted paper to appear in print. Reviewers tend to be especially critical of conclusions that contradict their own views and lenient towards those that accord with them. It has been argued that ideas that harmonize with reviewers are more likely to see print and to appear in premier journals. A busy reviewer may give a cursory read through a paper that superficially looks good, but miss subtle mistakes, or they may not take the time to chase down

every reference, or check all the statistics. If an author thinks they were treated unfairly by one journal, they can always go to another.

GER107: CULTURAL STUDIES

LECTURE 11 NOTES

Legal Frame Work for the Protection of Academic Freedom

Academic freedom entails the dynamics and societal advancement that invoke against oppression and intolerance. It is a course for human development that warrants the exercise of social awareness and promotion of intellectual skills. Academics are the torchbearers of society's goals. Therefore, the interrelationship between academia and functional democratic society greatly enhanced participatory development. Academics' mind, attitude and desires have immense influence on the formulation, implementation and monitoring of development indicates envisaged by society.

The word Academic Freedom originated from a German phrase -DieAkademised freiheit and was first used in Germany. It was formulated as Lehrfreiheit- a privilege of a professor and Lernfreiheit- a privilege of the research worker and student. However, the first time the concept of academic freedom received global attention was when the World University Service adopted the Lima Declaration on academic freedom in 1988. In Africa the Kampala Declaration was the standard bearer for the intellectual community to undertake its responsibility for the people of Africa.

The Kampala Declaration was produced at a symposium organized by CODESRIA in 1990. CODESRIA (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa) is an independent intellectual organization whose objectives are facilitating research, promoting research, based publishing and creating multiple fora geared towards the exchange of views and information among African scholars. Academic freedom entail issues such as the right to the academic community, individually or collectively in the pursuit, development and transmission of knowledge through research, study, discussion, documentation, production, creation and teaching, lecturing and writing. The classical theory of academic freedom is that professors should have the right to teach, conduct research and publish their research without interference and the students should have the corresponding rights to study and learn. Both the academic staff and the students ought to be accepted as privileged few, because of their knowledge and wisdom and the role they play as critics of society by its education mission or its public responsibility mission. University lecturers and students therefore work within the frame work of the right of free expression, freedom of enquiry, freedom of association, and freedom of publication.

It is important to note that academic freedom is swimming in difficult waters in some African countries as governments have legislations that categorized certain constructive comments as libelous and seditious, which of course constraints the work of academics. Secrets agents are

planted among officials in universities as well as among students to monitor the deeds and sayings of their colleagues. Research topics are censored, as there are topics that are assumed as inimical to the national interest while others will not just be tolerated.

GER107: CULTURAL STUDIES

LECTURE 12 NOTES

GAMBIA AND ITS PEOPLE

Gambia is a nation state with many linguistic and cultural variants. The various peoples did not live in isolation but had been interacting for generations which resulted to similar cultural values within a broad-based social set up. Kinship ties provided for the creation of special mutual ties with the various groups claiming bi-lateral and multi-lateral descent or dual ethnicity.

Traditionally, people take the family name of their father (santa, kontong) and have a given name which is generally Islamic or Christian origin. There are some names such as Manlafi or Kenbugul which is simple in term means nobody loves you mostly given to Yaradel or kanyelengo those whose children have died to distinguish between people with the same name and surname the name of the mother is generally added after given name. e.g. it two be known as Lamin sira Cham one of them would generally be known as Lamin Sira Cham after his mother. Where a child is named after a respectable elder alive or deceased, the name is prefixed Nba or Ndey Kumba--- mother of kumba, Mam or Mama Fatou – grandmother of fatou.

The sense of community has served as a welfare system in the Gambia where the old, the young and the disabled are given protection. Traditional Gambian society is based on the extended family where relatives may live in one large household or compound. Togetherness and cooperation take prominence that one can depend on one's family for help and support. The old are treated courteously and strangers are received hospitably. This has gained the Gambia the nickname named the smiling coast of Africa. At independence the national anthem was authored by Virginia Juli Howe, wife of the colonial administrator Jeremy Howe commissioner of Western Division was the author of the Gambia National Anthem in an open competition she won and was paid 50 pounds. Louis Thomasi was the designer of the Gambia Flag with five horizontal stripes---Red, White, Blue, White, Green. The Coat of Arms was developed by Mr. Potin a contractor at Public works Department and was adopted on 18 November 1964. It has two lions holding an axe and hoe, helmet of a knight, oil palm tree and the national motto – Progress, Peace, Prosperity. The national pledge is the combination of government and people, working together in union and harmony that will lead us to achieve the progress that were all desire, we must stand together as one people with one goal and move forward as one nation. For if we insist on pursuing our personal goals without keeping our collective objectives and responsibilities in mind then we shall be divided and divided we shall fall let us renew the promises we made to ourselves and to our country at the time of our independence, as enshrined in our national anthem.

Handout for Further Reading

At least a question will be set from this section

RELIGION, CULTURE AND AFRICAN SOCIETIES

The discussion here shall focus on African traditional Religion, with references to other religions, such as Christianity and Islam. The term “African” refers to black Africa, and “traditional” means “indigenous”.

Since religion is an instrument in the hands of man, it has to be viewed cautiously because it cannot be neutral politics. Academics is to approach religion with an open mind in order to better understand it.

Conceptual Issues

how do we define religion as academics.? Do we need to have one definition for religion?

We begin with an attempt to define “religion”. In so doing we must resist the temptation to define the word too narrowly. We must not, as some people do, think in terms only of Christianity or Islam or whatever religion we ourselves profess but, even when we avoid this narrow point of view, we find that there are almost as many definitions of religion as there are theologians and religious studies scholars. Definitions are often made according to the given scholar’s discipline or presuppositions or beliefs, thus reflecting on an anthropological, sociological, theological or psychological point of view. The bottom line is that we must have an open mind and evaluate it in a critical way and from different perspectives.

- The distinguished anthropologist, sir George Frazer, in his book *The Golden Bough*, understood religion as “a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the courses of nature and human life”. (Frazer 1983:3ff.).
- Another anthropologist, E.E. Evans-Pritchard, defines religion as “the reciprocal relation between God and man” (Evans-Pritchard 1965:65). We may find it difficult to accept this notion of reciprocity between God and man in so far as it seems to make man a co-equal of God. It may be said that if man wants all to be well with him, he must obey the behest of his maker or creator, though without implying that God has no prerogative to see that all is well with man despite the fact that man disobeys God.
- An African theologian, Francis Arinze, explains that religion may be defined objectively as well as subjectively; and he gives the following bi-partite definition. Subjectively, religion is the consciousness of one’s dependence on a transcendent Being and the tendency to worship Him. Objectively, religion is the body of truths, rites, and laws by which man is subordinated to the transcendent Being (Arinze 1970:8). Many people in fact see religion as belief in the existence of superhuman beings or super-sensible beings; and in the line with Arinze’s observation is the definition proposed by Robert H. Thouless. A psychologist: “Religion is a felt practical relationship with that is believed as a super-human being or beings: (Thouless 1934:66ff.)
- The atheists and leftist scholars look at religion as instrument in the hands of a group for manipulative purposes. According to Karl Marx, religion is “**the sob of the oppressed**

creature”, the heart of a heartless world. The spirit of conditions utterly unspiritual. It is the opiate of the people. It is the sigh of the oppressed. The idea of God is the keynote of a perverted civilization. To suppress religion which provides an illusionary happiness is to establish the claims of real happiness: (**Garaudy** 1966:106ff>)

- The same idea about religion was held by Engels. The lifetime friend of Karl Marx who remarked that the first word of religion is a lie (**Garaudy** 1966: 106-121)
- V I Lenin, the Russian community. Similarly, observed that religion is one of the aspects of spiritual oppression: that is, a tool by which people are suppressed or oppressed spiritually and when the communists consolidated their hold on the USSR, they banned all religions in that country.
- Sigmund Freud argued that religion is a mental sickness and a childhood fear.
- Jean-Paul Sartre ridiculed the idea of religion as something that emanated from God. According to him, if God was living, it must be a dead God. He questioned why there should be a lot of suffering, inequality and injustice in the world purportedly created by a “good” God. We cannot overlook the religious duty of man to his neighbor, and we should equally emphasize the horizontal as opposed to the vertical essence or importance of religion, the following definitions of religions are there highlighted:
 - Religion is man’s efforts in satisfying certain emotional needs by establishing and maintaining cordial relations between himself and the Super-sensible Being., as well as his fellow-man” (Nabofa 1989:6)
 - Religion may thus be seen as a state of the mind, with a firm belief in an ever-living God. Thus, in its entirety, religion can be said to be a practical relationship with what is believed to be a super-human being or beings, and who is also able to unite a group of believers under its umbrella. Religion may also be tersely described as an outward manifestation of an inner experience. The two most essential elements of religion are the experience of religion and the overt expression of that experience. An understanding of these two elements easily enables us to appreciate more fully the relationship between religion and culture. The African agency cannot be excluded from religion and as young intellectuals we must be aware of this without any apologies to anybody. Put differently, elements of African tradition always creep in to our religious practices because Africans had a culture before contact with imported revealed religions and the cultures were positive in themselves. We are aware that there is a world of difference between the experience of religion and the expression of religion. The experience is connected with the confrontation of what **Rudolf Otto** calls the Numinous – something too great and elusive for words to describe. The experience of the numinous leads one to a kind of self-evaluation which evokes in one a feeling of self-abasement and dependence. The holy also combines the attributes to that which causes a sense of awesomeness, eeriness, daunting, and self-abasement.

The expression of such an experience is what Alfred North Whitehead describes as “the Outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace”. This primary expression mainly clothes itself in the media of action and words., but partly in arts, Religious symbolic forms and emotional feelings resulting from religious experience.

Human culture which is so varied is often part of religion. It may be said that the experience of religion is almost the same the world over; but the ways in which people respond to or articulate their religious experience may differ according to these cultural variables. African tradition belief or religion is therefore the expression of African religious experience is the cultural context. Using traditional African symbolic forms, processes, and imageries. Our Africinity definitely finds itself in to our different religions. The concept of universality applies to adherence of monotheism than similarity in our exterior religion.

At this point it well to reiterate that the core of every religion is the direct experience of the Numinous. The ultimate Reality, or God. Many founders of religions have been spiritually enlightened people who had their illumination through such direct experience. Hence the kernel of their teachings such and ideals is almost identical., mostly emphasizing the unity to God, the brotherhood of man. Love, harmony and peaceful co-existence among all human beings_ ideas which are need to lead the faithful into eternal bliss. Unfortunately, however, when such illumined individuals have left the scene or have been translated into the great beyond, their successors ad followers have tended to distort the original teachings and idea9ls under the influence of political or economic factors, or racial pride or power-seeking, self-aggrandizement, inordinate ambition, imperialism or an acculturation drive.

Part of the human condition is man’s need to struggle and to cooperate with nature for his survival, and to find his place in the universe. In traditional African communities, people rely heavily on their religion in their struggle for survival. Most of their artefacts have a religious background.

Roomaker (1974: 11) has strongly stressed the idea that “through art we can know another’s view of the universe. African artifacts and artists show more than the eye sees, and they acquire a meaning or meanings that go beyond a photographic representation. Most of the meanings are religious. In Africa, as in other parts of the world, artists and craftsmen give expression to their society’s religious culture. African arts speak of human insight and understanding of human values, and of truth. In traditional African religion the artist is regarded as the people’s theologian or spokesman in religious matter. His products portray a philosophy and believe of his people. They are not mere decorations or simply pleasant to look at; they convey messages and ideas about the people religious experience. The communities’ ideas,

habits and values are dominated by religious doctrines. This is because religion is an important aspect of culture. But if that fact sometime seems exclusive in certain cultures. It is always very obvious in the African cultural context. Why is it that Africans wear amulets and other carvings for protection whether they are Muslims or Christians? These objects reflect their cultural values and the requirements of their specific communities.

African patrilineal societies.

In a patrilineal society, great prominence is given to the male cult of ancestors, while the reverse is the case in matrilineal societies. Likewise, a people who live very close to water, and thus have fishing as a major occupation, tends to acknowledge and worship water divinities which are believed to be controllers of the sea, rivers or lakes and all the good things that come out of them. Such people enter into a kind of covenant relationship with such water divinities in order that all may be well with them. In the same way, farming communities revere earth-divinities who are believed to enhance fertility in both plants and animals.

The structure of the society greatly influences a people's beliefs, religious practices and concept of the super-sensible world. For example, in a hierarchically organized society with graded paramount rulers, there is a tendency for people to have a concept of God as a King or Queen with other divine beings under him or her also arranged in a hierarchical order. This is the situation among all centralized societies in African a king or emperor as head. Among the Yoruba, who have **Olodumare** as the Supreme Being, the owner of all. With about 1,600 divinities speculatively arranged under Him hierarchically and in the following broad groups principal divinities, divinities that came into existence after the creation of the world, defied personalities, those associated with natural phenome, and those generated from natural elements. Conversely, stateless societies otherwise known as egalitarian societies, such as those of the Igbo and Urhobo peoples, regard the Supreme Being as just one of the spiritual beings: though believed to be the first among equals. He has no power to impose his will on other spiritual forces.

African matrilineal societies

Speculation and theologizing on the sex of God is also culturally based. In a matrilineal society, where the mother has more claim on the child, God is regarded as other, while in patrilineal societies God is looked upon as a father. Again, in society where the mother is mostly the bread-winner, the supreme being is conceived as a mistress. Where pottery dominates people's occupation, especially when such an occupation is mostly carried out by women bread-winners, Gods is given names which reflect her as the mother who moulded earth and all the creatures therein. It is this context that we may understand the **Ijo** names of God: **Tamuno**, meaning the woman or mother who moulded or created the world: and **Owoyengi**, meaning the mother who provides all our human needs. The **Ijo** is a

matrilineal society and women do most of the pottery work and were traditionally the major bread-winners in olden times. The Yoruba name of God Olodumare (meaning the Owner of All) is an integral part of the culture of a patrilineal and hierarchically part of the culture of a patrilineal and hierarchically based society. We can thus see how other aspects of a people's culture influence their religious concepts and convictions. On the question of destiny or predestination, the Yoruba believe that the individual alone declares what his destiny is life should be. In the cultures man is an individual entity or whole community, from these few examples it may be seen hoe a people's religion and concept of the super-sensible world are influence by the structure of the society. If human beings are to live normal lives in reasonable peace, they must behave in some prescribed ways.

In every traditional society the required norms of behavior are based on religious doctrines and sanctions. people acquire these ways of behavior through socialization, education and experience. This socialization and education occur in large measures during religious rites (such as initiation) and cultic activities of various forms.

The rites of passage in Africa involving circumcision (male and female) are colored with African culture and religion. Such systems of socialization have been so formulated that they have become an integral part of religion, which is saturated with traditional religion. In view of the fact that such socialization systems have been given sacred backing., they gave the power of force and coercion over the people. It is for this reason that the people's religion guides and directs individual action in the community.

In traditional African societies it is believed that everything in the physical world has a spiritual counterpart, and that all the events and creatures in the physical world are controlled by the spiritual beings in the super-sensible world. For example, rain is believed to be controlled by some spiritual forces, solar divinities, to be precise; fertility is believed to be under influence of the earth divinity; artists (including all those in the performing arts) are believed to be inspired by spiritual forces. The Urhobo and Isoko peoples in Nigeria's Bendel State have music called **Uhawha**; thunder and lightning are regard as instruments manifesting the wrath of God; floods and droughts are believed to be inhabited by some spiritual forces; morality and all codes of conduct are believed to be jealously guarded by the ancestors and ethical divinities. The way people dress, settle disputes, dance, communicate, and the type of occupations ideas and practices., thus, in the Africa context, one cannot speak of culture without instantly thinking also of traditional religious. How, then, has indigenus religion in Africa influenced Islam and Christianity which came later into the continent?

Professor Isidore Okpewho carried out a study of Africa traditional religion, Islam and Christianity. He came to some interesting conclusion. He noted that most of the religious beliefs and practices in Islam and African traditional religion (such as marriage, use of charms, community living, and theocracy) appear to be quite related; and so, both religions seem to fuse smoothly and fertilize each other. Without much noticeable influence of the traditional religion On Islam are some elements of dance that are now being introduced into Islamic liturgy. It is in Christianity that we can easily identify the influence of African religious beliefs and practices. The earliest Christian missionaries sought to impart Christian doctrines with foreign idioms, making use of Western ideograms and imageries, and introducing Christianity fundamentally based on Western culture. Their aim was to transform the converts in Assimilados by acculturation, in their objective of cultural imperialism, they cared little about African values. Their concern was to Christianize Africans not to Africanize Christianity. The Cristian liturgy did not appeal to the people at that time because it did not have much meaning and reality for them, and so there was no total conversion. When it became obvious to the Christian leaders that the people were not totally converted, they embarked upon an African Christian theology. The aim was to contextualize Christian theology in African culture. The liturgy was considerably singing, drumming, clapping f hands, and dancing were introduced into Christian worship. The traditional form of marriage and most of its essential rituals were also introduced into the Christian pattern of marriage. The influence of the traditional African religion on Christianity may in fact be seen in the following areas.

Marriage: polygyny and marriage rites performed in the traditional way before going to the church to seal it up, it now the order of the day.

Naming ceremonies: the rites performed by some Christians groups have much traditional religious coloration, especially the traditional symbolic elements and processes that feature in such rites.

procreation: Attitude towards birth control practices and abortion are greatly influenced by the traditional concept of the sanctity of life.

Divination practices: These traditional practices are present in many Christian denominations.

Role of mediums, prophets and prophetesses: These activities are well recognized, encouraged and edified in many Christian denominations in Africa.

Sacrifice: sacrificial practices which take the form of almsgiving and expiatory-cum-thanksgiving social parties, are commonly seen among Christians.

Exorcism practices: Bathing in streams to wash off impurities is a practice introduced into African Christianity from the traditional religion.

Externalization of problems: Among Christians, external agencies like witchcraft are commonly blamed for people's faults, problems and sufferings; and witchcraft,

regarded as an agent of Satan, is a common and strong belief among African Christianity.

Role of women: The greater opportunities given to women to serve in certain sacred positions is also something borrowed from traditional African is also something borrowed from traditional African religious practices.

Honors: the conferment of chieftaincy titles on people in church (such as Baba Ijo, Iya Ijo, Baba-Egbe among the Yoruba) is a practice borrowed by Christianity from African culture.

Dress of priest: In some Christian groups this may be traced to African religion and culture; for example, the current dressing of various colors and the wearing of beads by some Christian priests are traditionally Africa.

Harvest thanksgiving: This is something introduced from African traditional religion in order to prevent Christians from sending their fruits of harvest to the fertility cults and ancestors of their communities.

Manner of curing and blessing: This is traditionally African, for instance, the way in which some Christians use some psalms against their enemies contrasts with the fact that Jesus Christ did not curse his enemies or teach his disciples to do so. One need only listen to the way in which some Christians curse their enemies to see element of traditional African psychology in operation.

Cult of ancestors: This manifests itself in the Church in the form of outings and memorial services – practices which are not enjoined in the New Testament.

Wake-keeping: These ceremonies, as part of the burial rites, are from the traditional religion and culture; traditionally the dead were buried in the middle of the night or a few hours before dawn.

The Christian liturgy: This has been greatly influenced by the traditional religion. In the Roman Catholic Church, the Gregorian chanting pattern is fast giving way to traditional forms of worship.

Evangelization methods: many Churches have been turned into healing-homes like those of traditional African shrines, and the healing ministry is a very powerful means of winning new converts.

Institutional nomenclature: The naming of Christian institutions after some principal divinities, ancestors or founders of towns or villages, and after traditional heroes, is one of the ways of merging Christianity with indigenous beliefs and practices.

Personal nomenclature: Some African personal names borne by Christians strongly reflect African religious beliefs and culture.: for instance, the Yoruba personal names Babatimde (Father has come back: or Reincarnation of mother”) reflect the abiding vigor of the traditional African concept and belief in reincarnation or the cyclic rhythm of human life, also highlighting the concept of two families which originated from the same stock; of one in the physical world, the other in the spiritual realm, and in between them members of these related families migrating from time to time, in the form of birth and death.

Participation in traditional festivals: Christians take an active part in festivals held in honor of indigenous divinities and national heroes, and exhibiting religious and cultural display. Traditional masquerades also come out to perform during Christian festivals.

All the above reflect the adaptation of Christianity to the African cultural continuum. The adaptation has enabled Christianity not only to become more meaningful to the people, but also to measure up with and serve more meaningfully to the needs of the time. But Christianity itself has also been greatly influencing the traditional beliefs and practices of adherents of the indigenous religion. There is in fact a kind of cultural cross-fertilization among all the major religion being practiced in Africa. This is a consequence of the development of human consciousness of the divine, culture (and so also religion) is dynamic. As people’s consciousness develops, their culture (including religious beliefs and practices) also evolves. Religion especially, is a dynamic element; so, as people meet with other cultures, their consciousness will be influenced and they will grow to a better understanding of what they believe to be Ultimate Reality of God. The following are the principle elements, identified by professor Isidore Okpewho, that constitute the beliefs and doctrines of the three main religions In Africa.

AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

TRADITIONAL RELIGION	ISLAM	CHRISTIANITY
1. Believe in a supreme being with different names and attributes in different African cultures	Belief in a supreme being known as Allah with 99 names	Belief in a supreme being called Jehovah, Elohim, Lord, God
2. Belief u the various grades of divinities; primordial deities, deified personalities, and divinities associated with natural elements such as the sun, thunder and lighting	Belief in angels and archangels, each with specific functions.	Belief in angles and archangels, each with special functions.
3. Belief in spirits which are lesser and undomesticated. Having no shrines established for them	Belief in spirits called jinn and Satan	Belief in spirits of various temperaments, including Satan

4. Belief in life after death which is basic of the cult of ancestors	Belief in saint and holy men such as the caliphs of the first generation. Such as the mourides, tijanniyya, quadryya venerate their leader and belief they can extract blessing from them	Belief in saint especially the apostles of Christ
5. Belief in mysterious powers, including witchcraft, sorcery and efficacy of magic and medicine.	Belief in charms, Tira and kabalistic principles.	Belief in the use and efficacy of psalms, use of the cross in exorcism, incense with kabalistic principles and holy oil and water.
6. Eschatology; the just are happily reunited with the ancestors at the end of life and are reincarnated into the same family; the wicked are driven out and become bands of wandering and disgruntled spirits lamenting their fate.	Eschatology; the righteous go to enjoy eternal bliss in heaven, while the unjust go to hellfire.	Eschatology; the righteous enter into the kingdom of god in heaven, to God in heaven, to enjoy eternal bliss with God and all the hosts of Saints and Angels; the wicked suffer in the hellfire
7. Cultic functionaries; high priest	Caliphs and Imams.	Pope, bishops and pastors.

We can see from the above tabulations that the adherents of these three religions believe in the reality of one supreme being who is the Author, Creator and Unique controller of the universe and all therein. They also believe in the existence of some other principle spiritual beings who are next in rank to God. These are the beings referred to by Muslims and Christians as Angels. Just as angles of various grades are real to Christian and Muslims, so the divinities are real in the African culture and belief-system. There is also a strong belief in lesser spiritual entities. These are the low elements or spirits who have no shrines or temples erected for them. They may be regarded as undomesticated spirits. Divinities and ancestors have shrines and sacred days set aside or their worship and thus they become domesticated spirits, these act as intermediaries between man and the Supreme Being.

All the three religions believe in the duality of man. Man is made up of physical body and spiritual body. At death the physical body, which is part of the earth, returns to earth through the process of decay, while the soul, which is imperishable, continues to live on in the spiritual realm. The souls of the righteous go to enjoy to eternal bliss with the ancestors. The wicked are directed to the hellfire. Africans strongly believe in the re-birth of all good departed soul personalities, a concept which strengthens the family. The re-birth is a desired return to these “sunlit” world.

A general tolerance allows people of different religions to live side by side to learn from another, and prepare the way for a religious dialogue that was difficult or impossible earlier. The closer understandings of all religions, Christian, Muslim and traditional, can help towards a better adjustment of all African life to the many problems of modern times (Parrinder 1969:237)

Religion and Science: Why the Schism?

Like religion, science is an important element in human culture. Schism between science and religion has been documented since Greco-Roman antiquity. In the 19th century European world Charles Darwin, a brilliant scientist and also a Christian, came out with his two books entitled **The Origin of Species and The Descent of Man**. Darwin’s discoveries greatly challenged the biblical stories about the origin of humankind: while the bible teaches that God created man out of nothing or out of the dust of the earth, breathed the breath of life into him and made him a living soul or being. Darwin’s scientific investigations revealed that man’s evolution to his present stage of homo sapiens took thousands of years, and was not just a one-day affair as described in the book of **Genesis** (1:26-31). The authorities of the church felt threatened by this discovery and started to persecute **Charles Darwin** as they had previously persecuted earlier scientists like **Copernicus** and **Galileo**. The church proceeded to persecute and excommunicate such brilliant scientists and sons of theirs instead of using their scientific discoveries to forge ahead towards a better and deeper understanding of man, his nature, the world and system within he lives and has his being. It has rarely been possible to house science and religion under one roof; and today, according to **Janus** (1960:11)

Millions are held fast in the chains of religious and scientific dogma and millions more are stranded in the vast no-man’s land between religious and scientific thought, crucified in an attempt to serve both a master and a mistress absolutely. The gap between science and religion continues to get wider and wider because both of them operate at two opposing premises, science, by definition, is a body of rules and conceptions, based on experience and logical inference, embodied in material achievements and in a fixed form of tradition, and carried on by some sort of social organization (Malinowski 1982: 34) Bronislaw and Malinowski identified the following as some of the differences between religion and science. Science is born of physical experience; religion comes from inner experience, expressed through cultural elements, and it is also made by tradition while science is guided by reason and corrected by observation, religion is impervious to both, lives in an atmosphere of mysticism and faith. Science is open to everybody; a common good of the whole

community; most potent religious knowledge and practices are occultist, taught through mysterious initiations, handed on in a hereditary or at least in very exclusive affiliations. While science is based on the conception of natural forces, religion springs from the idea of mystic impersonal power, which is believed in by most primitive people. Mana or spiritual force is the essence of religion (Malinowski) through its reasoning capacity and technology, natural science can supply only the material needs of humankind; but religion deal with the core and essence of human existence. When people are depressed, when a dear one departs from this world, religion tends to be very useful in comforting humankind. Religion is not to rely on intellectual body of opinion, but a special mode of behaviors, a pragmatic attitude built up of reason, feeling, and will alike. It is a mode of action as well as a system of belief, a sociological phenomenon as well as a personal experience.

Religion will arise and function in situations of emotional stress and crisis of life such as failures and disappointments of all kinds, death, and many other vicissitudes of life for which science and reason cannot provide as solution. It is religion which opens up escapes from such situations when no empirical way-out is apparent except by ritual and belief in the domain of the supernatural.

Both science and religion are working towards the same goals; that is probing into the mysteries of God who is the author of nature. Although they use different tools and methods in their investigation, there ought not to be conflict between them. It should however, be realized that the conflict is not between science and religion parse, but a personality conflict between shallow-minded scientists and religionists who do not really understand the mysteries of their common object of investigation. In traditional African culture there has been no conflict between science and religion. If anything, the two complement each other in their search for the **ultimate reality** and in their aspirations towards the welfare of humankind.